

God's Blueprint For The Home

Lesson 2: God's Blueprint For The Home



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

God's Blueprint For The Home

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Learn about God's command for love in the home, the importance of love in the home, and the quality of love that God commands for the home

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Lesson 2:

God's Blueprint For Love In The Home

In order to build a home according to God's blueprint, it must be built with love every step of the way. Love must describe every thought, every word, and every action in the home. It is the not-so-secret ingredient for a successful home that pleases God.

Love is absolutely key to everything that is good in the home. Whenever love is in the home, there's joy, peace, unity, service, etc. In fact, every good thing that can happen in the home is a direct result of love. And, in contrast, every evil thing that can happen in the home is a direct result of the absence of love.

Unfortunately, our ideas about love in the home are often distorted by our culture. You see, whenever the world talks about love, it tends to refer to an emotion of fondness and, sometimes, to a feeling of infatuation. And, although both have a place in the home (particularly between husband and wife), these fall far short of God's picture of love for the home! In fact, settling only for these expressions of love that are often portrayed in the movies can leave us with absolutely devastated homes that lack true fulfillment!

As we consider God's blueprint for the home, then, we must recognize that the Architect of the home has a perfect design for love. He tells us who our love must be directed toward in the home so that we are not left guessing and do not miss any of the recipients of the love that ought to be shown in the home. Then, He teaches us the importance of showing love in the home in a way that should help us place fulfilling this great responsibility as a top priority. And, He teaches us exactly what this perfect love ought to look like.

God Commands Love In The Home

God's blueprint for a successful home that is pleasing to Him does not just *involve* love; it *revolves* around love. But, who does His blueprint for the home involve loving? I believe the answer is much more far-reaching than you may initially believe.

Love between husband and wife

It should come as no great surprise to learn that God commands love between husband and wife. Even those who are in the world (generally) recognize the importance of love between husband and wife. For instance, the apostle Paul commanded, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25). And, older women are instructed to teach the younger women "to love their husbands" (Titus 2:4).

Now, there is a different Greek word for "love" used in these two verses. We'll explore this in greater detail later in this lesson. However, for now, I just want you to observe that both husband and wife are expected to love each other. And, even though the kind of love that is instructed concerning the wife in Titus 2:4 is a lesser kind of love than is commanded of the husband in Ephesians 5:25, there should be no doubt that husbands and wives are to love one another equally with the greatest kind of love that is possible. In fact, as we will consider in a moment, this kind of love is expected to be shown toward all people (Matthew 22:39).

Then, we should also consider that the greatest way husbands and wives should show their love for one another is concerning their souls. For, there is no greater need that any member of the family has than to go to Heaven. Therefore, above physical security, above financial stability, above meeting physical needs, above meeting emotional needs *must* be meeting the *spiritual* needs of our spouses! We should want to do everything that we can to help them live in a way that will be rewarded with eternal life in Heaven.

Love between parents and children

Love should also be shown in the home between parents and children. In the same verse that tells older women to teach younger women to love their husbands, it also says that younger women are to be taught to “love their children” (Titus 2:4). Proverbs 13:24 says, “He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.” The implication is that there are actions that parents should take that will show love toward their children.

Although the Scriptures primarily address the love that parents should have for their children, children should also be taught to love their parents and to love one another. For, there is a general responsibility to love all the people we are in contact with, as mentioned previously (Matthew 22:39). Then, an additional passage to consider concerning the love that should be shown between children is 1 John 3:10-12. The passage says that those who do not love their brethren are not true children of God. For, God’s command from the beginning was “that we should love one another” (verse 11), not being like Cain who was wicked and murdered his brother. And, while I realize this passage is talking about love between Christian brethren, the example of Cain concerns physical siblings.

There can be no doubt that God wants parents and children to love one another. But, again, the thing that parents and children should love the most about one another is the souls of the others. Every member of the home should want the absolute best for the spiritual wellbeing of the others. This should be more important than the kind of education our children receive, how many friends our children have, taking

care of one another when we are physically ill, providing each other with physical things, etc.! The greatest desire any member of the family should have for another is that the others will live in a way that will go to Heaven some day!

Love for God

Although love between the members of the home is extremely important in the home, it is not the most crucial element of a successful home that pleases God. Instead, the kind of love that is most important in a home is the love that every member of the home has toward God. In fact, only when every member of the home truly loves God can they show the greatest kind of love toward one another!

Whenever Jesus was asked, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” (Matthew 22:36), He responded, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). There is good reason why loving God with everything we are is the greatest of all the commandments in God’s law. Not only is He worthy of such love, but this kind of love will cause all the members of the family to keep God’s commandments and not allow His commandments to be burdensome to them (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

This kind of love for God should be valued, taught, and fostered in the home so that every member of the family will choose to be obedient to the commandments of God! For instance, Moses commanded the Israelites, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5). Then, Moses instructed them, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Then, it is essential to recognize that we should love God even more than we love the members of our families. For instance, Jesus taught,

The Importance Of Love In The Home

“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26). Now, Jesus is certainly *not* teaching that we should not love our family members. His only point is that we should love Him more than we love everyone else. So, if there is ever a conflict of interests between God and our family members, we must always choose to serve God (compare with Matthew 10:34-39)!

Love for all people

God wants all people to show love for all other people. After stating that the greatest commandment is to love God with everything we are, Jesus said, “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’ (Matthew 22:39). So, the threshold that we are commanded to meet in loving other people is according to how we show love toward ourselves.

In fact, the “Golden Rule” is an appropriate application of this passage. In Matthew 7:12, Jesus commanded, “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” All of our conduct toward our families and outside our families should meet this standard. We must consider how we would want people to treat us, talk with us, think about us, etc. – and then treat the people who are around us in the same kinds of ways!

Consider who Jesus’ command to show this kind of love toward includes. Jesus’ instruction was to love your “neighbor” as yourself. A study of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) demonstrates that our neighbors are anyone who is around us who we have the opportunity and ability to show our love toward. This would certainly include the members of our physical families (even our extended families), our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, our physical neighbors, our friends, our co-workers, and our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Once again, in order to love them as we love ourselves, we should love their souls most of all and want to do as much good for them as we possibly can to help them go to Heaven (Galatians 6:10)!

Love ought to characterize every member of the home. And, every member ought to have or develop the kind of love that we have just been describing – toward God, toward other members of the family, and toward all people. But, now we need to consider *why* this love is so important.

It results in fulfilling responsibilities

Have you ever considered *why* Jesus said that the “first and great commandment” is to love God with all of your being and the “second” is to love your neighbor as yourself, in Matthew 22:36-39? Of all God’s commandments, how could these *two* be singled out (whether in the Old Law or in the New)? I believe Jesus answers this question in verse 40. He said, “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” That is, keeping every other commandment God has given you hinges on whether you will truly love God and love others as you love yourself!

The apostle Paul indicates the exact same thing in Romans 13:8-10. He said, “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

As you consider these two passages, I want you to recognize that love in the home (as we discussed previously) is absolutely essential for every member of the family to fulfill his/her roles and responsibilities. Love is essential for husbands and wives to avoid divorce. Love is essential for husbands to treat their wives how God desires. Love is essential for wives to submit to and respect their husbands. Love is essential for parents to raise their children in the way that is best for them. Love is

essential in order for the members of the home to live faithful Christian lives. Love is essential for the members of the home to do good to others as often as there is opportunity. Without love in the home, there will be a failure to fulfill God-given responsibilities *somewhere!*

It holds families together

People often ask those who have been married for many years and have seemed to be successful in their homes about their “secret.” How could they stay married for so long – to the same person? How could they do so well at raising their children? How could they be so committed to serving God faithfully in the home and have used their homes so well to accomplish God’s purposes for the family?

It should surprise no one when “love” is the answer that is given. In fact, with all due respect to these individuals who have lived as models for us to imitate in the home, they are not the ones who stumbled upon some great secret that no one else can know! The reality is that God has told us that love is the key to this kind of success. Colossians 3:14 says, “But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”

As we put on all of the characteristics that ought to describe us as Christians (as identified in Colossians 3:12-17), it would all be lacking without love! Then, not only does love perfectly bind all of these characteristics together in our lives so that we can please God, but love binds us together with others. Whenever all the members of the family are committed to showing love toward God, toward all the other members of the family, and toward all others, the family will be united and be at peace. They will have the common objective of serving God and serving others. It is only whenever members of the family decide not to live according to the ways of love that problems and difficulties arise in the home, because they will be focused on serving themselves rather than others!

It results in pleasing God

In a few moments, we will be considering the things love does, from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Before we do, I want to consider the first three verses of the

chapter and observe that love is absolutely essential to pleasing God. Although 1 Corinthians 13 specifically teaches us about love between brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, this passage is just as applicable to love in the home.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

Whenever there were problems in the church at Corinth of such a nature that the members of the church were not treating others how they should, it is interesting that God’s solution was love. And, before God described love to them, He wanted them to recognize that they could not possibly please Him without it! The same thing is true in the home. All of the problems in the home can be traced to a failure to love properly. So, we must recognize that even though we may live to serve God in all other areas of our lives (even giving ourselves as martyrs for Christ), it will all be for nothing if we do not love properly!

The Quality Of Love God Commands In The Home

Up to this point in this lesson, we have been using the word “love” in a very general way. However, we now want to get very specific to better understand the love that God commands in the home. Fortunately, God teaches us exactly what love in the home ought to look like. It is only when we choose to love how God teaches us to love that all the benefits will be experienced.

Different kinds of love

For just a moment, I want you to think about how your culture would define “love.” Today, as I mentioned earlier, it is most commonly believed to

be an emotional fondness. Sometimes the ideas of physical attraction and infatuation are also attached with it. So, it is common for people in society today to talk about “falling in love.” Then, these people who “fall in love” often lose their sense of better judgment and simply act according to their feelings and emotions.

The problem with this as our working definition of “love” can be seen all around us. You see, people who “fall in love” often “fall out of love” whenever their feelings of fondness and affection change toward the one who was loved. It is common for people going through divorce to claim that they have fallen out of love with their spouses whenever they experience difficult times in life or whenever physical attraction fades. And, it is common for married people to “fall in love” with someone else they have no business having intimate relationships with. Even with regard to children and parents, emotions and feelings can change over time. This is why some parents can abuse their children, why some children can harm their parents, and why respect is not always shown between them.

You see, the glue that binds us together will be the glue that holds us together! If that glue is a “love” that is based on feelings and emotions, it will not keep us together during the difficult times. Thankfully, God’s blueprint for the home involves a much more powerful adhesive than this!

For instance, I want you to recognize how the Bible teaches us the need to *learn* to love others. In Titus 2:4 (as we have seen), young women are to be taught by the older women to love their husbands and their children. In Ephesians 5:25, husbands are to learn from Christ as to how they should love their wives. And, 1 Thessalonians 4:9 says, “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.”

So, at least with regard to the way the Bible uses the word “love,” love is not merely an emotion or feeling of fondness that we fall in and out of. Instead, it is something that can be *learned* and we can *train* ourselves to possess! Actually, the Greeks had multiple words for “love.” And, these words reflected different levels of love. One level of love

was an erotic and sexual love (“eros”). One love was a love between parents and children (“storge”). One love was an affectionate regard and friendly type of love (“philia”). And, one love was a selfless and sacrificial type of love (“agape”).

Now, it is *not* my contention that we should not possess all of these kinds of love. For instance, even though the Greek New Testament does not use the word “eros” (romantic and sexual love), it *should* be present within a marriage. For instance, the Song of Solomon demonstrates how husbands and wives *should* possess a level of physical attraction, and the New Testament teaches that sexual desires must be fulfilled in the marriage (see 1 Corinthians 7:1-5). Yet, feelings of attraction can be fleeting and unreliable – and must not be the bedrock of love in the home!

Then, while there must be “philia” love (warm and friendly affection) in the home (as a form of this word is used in Titus 2:4), I want to focus on the fact that the highest form of all love is commanded within the home. It is directly used of the husband’s responsibility to love his wife in Ephesians 5:25. And, it is the kind of love that is involved in the two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:36-40).

This “agape” love is a self-giving, selfless, and sacrificial kind of love that *always* seeks what is in the best interest of the one being shown love. And, it is *not* dependent in any way on being shown love in return! This is how God can expect us to love our enemies even while they are trying to harm us (Matthew 5:43-48). This kind of love, though, is much greater than any emotion or feeling. Instead, this kind of love is a *choice*! And, we should never settle for a lesser form of love. For, this love is the only kind of love that will accomplish all that we have been studying about through this lesson! In fact, I would suggest that the lesser forms of love will only be enjoyed to their greatest possible extent when we show this greater form of love!

God is the perfect example of love

God is the perfect Teacher of how to love. Recall that 1 Thessalonians 4:9 says that the Thessalonian Christians were “taught by God to love

one another.” Once again, Ephesians 5:25 instructs husbands to love their wives “just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” The reason why God is the perfect Teacher on how to show this kind of agape love is because “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Quite literally, God is “*agape*”! So, if you want to learn what “agape” love looks like, it looks exactly like God!

Romans 5:5 helps us to understand how we can learn love from God. It says, “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” The Holy Spirit has poured out God’s love in the pages of the Bible. Throughout the Scriptures, the Bible helps us to learn about God’s amazing love. Namely, it teaches us about God’s sacrificial and selfless love that was shown for us whenever God sent Jesus Christ to die for us. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8)! John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

So, God’s love was not based on an emotional whim that hit Him so that He “fell in love” with sinners one day. Instead, God’s love was completely selfless and sacrificial and acted in the best interest of those He loved. This love was so great that Jesus Christ left Heaven, came to earth, suffered at the hands of sinners, and was put to a horrible death on the cross. But, this love was not for selfish reasons. Instead, it was all because we needed to be saved from the consequences of our sins! And, this love was demonstrated even toward the “unlovable.” Remember that God demonstrated His love toward us, while we were still sinners!

God’s definition of love

Now, God expects us to love Him and others in the same way He has shown us His love. Ephesians 5:1-2 says, “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” So, every one we are commanded to love (as discussed

earlier in this lesson) must receive this kind of love from us.

Fortunately, God has taught us even more about the characteristics of this kind of love. Returning to 1 Corinthians 13, God teaches us what this love does in verses 4 through 7. “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Now, let’s take up a consideration of the actions of “*agape*” love, recognizing that this is the love God has shown toward us and that He commands us to show toward others (including the members of the home). And, we should remember that this is how love must act, regardless of whether this kind of love is returned to us! Then, remember that 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 taught that without this kind of love being shown toward everyone, our service for God is useless!

(1) Love suffers long. True love has this quality that is patiently willing to suffer through the wrongs that other people may do against us. Rather than getting upset and becoming quickly angered by the things that other people do to us or have failed to do, we should put our anger and frustration on hold in order to act in their best interests. After all, this is exactly how God is longsuffering with us whenever we sin against Him (2 Peter 3:9).

(2) Love is kind. True love has this quality of being generous, charitable, considerate, and helpful to others. This quality ought to be reflected in our thoughts, thinking how we can do and say kind things to others. It ought to be reflected in our words, speaking only words that are seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6). And, it ought to be reflected in our conduct, doing only the things that will be helpful toward them.

(3) Love does not envy. True love stays away from this quality of rivalry that is not only jealous of what another has, but that also seeks to deprive the other of it. No member of the family should ever be in competition with another in a way that will foster hard feelings, angry words, etc. Recognize that all

the members of the home are supposed to be “on the same team” and working together to accomplish the purposes of God, not trying to work against each other (or anyone else).

(4) Love does not parade itself and is not puffed up. True love stays away from being big-headed, bragging about self, and arrogance. Rather than being big-headed, love is big-hearted. Love is humble and wants to serve others ahead of serving our own desires (Philippians 2:3-4). It does not raise ourselves above others. And, in connection with humility, we should be able to acknowledge the mistakes and failures that we make in order to say “I’m sorry” and make the necessary corrections.

(5) Love does not behave rudely. True love does not act or talk in a manner that is “unbecoming” of who a Christian ought to be. Instead, love acts properly. And, this is *not* just true when things are going well and it is easy to act in a self-controlled and courteous kind of way. Rather, this even applies to the moments of disagreement that will be experienced and whenever someone wants to accuse and argue with us! We might simply say that true love never argues, yells in a mean-spirited kind of way, belittles, or insults others.

(6) Love does not seek its own. True love is not selfish. It does not put your own interest and desires above the interests, desires, and wellbeing of others. It does not make other people serve us. Instead, it seeks to serve others. It doesn’t “look out for ‘number one’” – unless, of course, “number one” is God, “number two” is your spouse, and “number three” is everyone else! Love simply does not make everyone and everything else revolve around us. Rather, we will want to be looking for every opportunity to give of ourselves.

(7) Love is not provoked. True love is not easily drawn to anger. Love keeps a cool head. Rather than giving into a burst of emotion that lashes out in an angry and unbecoming kind of way, love causes us to control our emotions. Love cannot be irritable or “unhinged.” Love cannot be too touchy and easily set off. We should never make other people feel as if they have to “walk on eggshells” whenever they are around us in fear that we will be

easily provoked to an emotional response of anger (or some other emotion).

(8) Love thinks no evil. True love does not keep a record of wrongs that have been committed against us. This is particularly true whenever sin has been committed and corrected. Forgiveness must be extended in order to receive the forgiveness of God (see Matthew 6:14-15). So, love does not harbor and store up all the wrongs that have been committed against us in the past so that we can use them to our advantage later. And, love does not live in the past so as to seek revenge, to continually rehash old issues, to relive past mistakes, and to hold grudges.

(9) Love does not rejoice in iniquity. True love is not happy whenever someone sins against God. True love recognizes that sin is never helpful. It never accomplishes anything that is good. It always messes things up. Ultimately, it results in the spiritual destruction and punishment of sinners in Hellfire. So, we should never be pleased to hear about anyone choosing to do things that are contrary to God’s ways.

(10) Love rejoices in truth. True love wants everyone to live according to the ways of truth. This is love’s greatest ambition. So, we should be glad whenever the people in our lives choose to believe and obey the truth that God has revealed in the pages of the Bible. And, we should be glad whenever they are committed to only speaking words of truth to us. Furthermore, we should always be working to foster an environment around us where people know that we do rejoice in truth rather than in evil.

(11) Love bears all things. True love bears with and protects others. Certainly, we all deal with people who do not always do the things they ought to do, say the things they ought to say, and think the things they ought to think. Sometimes things are done that should not be done. Sometimes things are not done that should be done. Yet, love is committed to doing what is in the best interest of that person. Love does not gossip and tell others about all the flaws of another (though there is a time to publicly rebuke someone for unrepented sin, see Matthew 18:15-17). Love will do all it can to help someone in sin correct the sin, rather than just walk away from him/her.

(12) Love believes all things. True love always seeks to trust others. It is not cynical or quick to find fault in others for no reason at all. Love causes us to believe the best possible thing about others. It causes us to assign the best possible motives on the actions of others rather than quickly assuming the worst. Although love is not blind and unwilling to accept the truth, it is unwilling to accept anything less than the best explanation until there is solid proof that is given to think otherwise. Love gives the “benefit of the doubt” at all times.

(13) Love hopes all things. True love always hopes that things will get better. There will certainly be things in the home that happen which we wish were not true. There will be things that we wish would change. And, even when those we love commit sin, love holds out hope for them rather than losing all confidence and running away. So, love recognizes that as long as our loved ones have life and the ability to reason, things can get better!

(14) Love endures all things. True love does not give up. No matter what kinds of evils Satan may try to throw at the members of the home, true love causes them all to be victorious because they will never cut and run! True love is not just willing to fulfill all of the responsibilities of love whenever things are going well. Instead, it will fulfill all of these same responsibilities even when there are times of great difficulty!

Conclusion

Love is crucial to the success and wellbeing of any home! Show me a home that practices this kind of true love, and I will show you a home that pleases the Lord, that overcomes obstacles and difficulties, that is selfless, and where the members always seek the best interests of the others. But, show me a home that does not practice this kind of true love, and I will show you a home that has serious problems and that can be easily broken apart. Finally, after teaching us how to practice true love, 1 Corinthians 13:8 says, “Love never fails.” Everything else that tries to hold a family together will eventually fail. But, love will never fail!

Study Questions

What does it mean to “love”?

1. God Commands Love In The Home

Where does God command love between husband and wife?

Where does God command love between parents and children?

Where does God command love for God?

Where does God command love for all people?

2. The Importance Of Love In The Home

How does love result in fulfilling responsibilities?

How does love hold families together?

How does love result in pleasing God?

3. The Quality Of Love God Commands In The Home

How many kinds of “love” did the Greeks recognize?
What is the highest form of love?

(9) Love does not rejoice in iniquity –

Who is the perfect example of love? What can you learn from His love?

(10) Love rejoices in truth –

Briefly discuss the following actions of love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, based on the *New King James Version*).

(11) Love bears all things –

(1) Love suffers long –

(12) Love believes all things –

(2) Love is kind –

(13) Love believes all things –

(3) Love does not envy –

(14) Love endures all things –

(4) Love does not parade itself and is not puffed up –

(5) Love does not behave rudely –

(6) Love does not seek its own –

(7) Love is not provoked –

(8) Love thinks no evil –